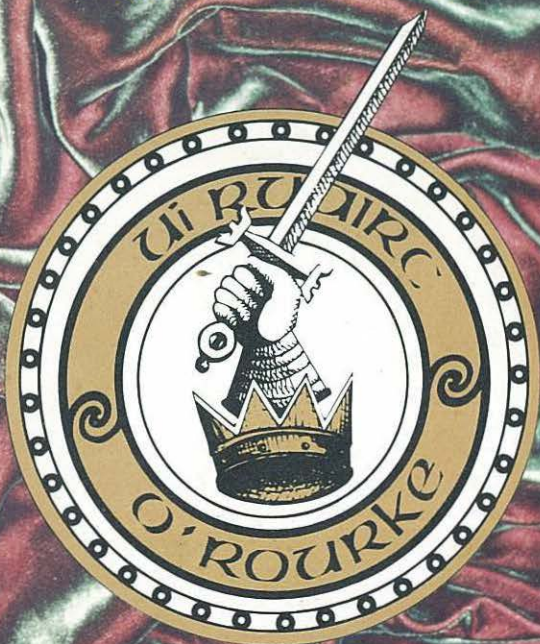
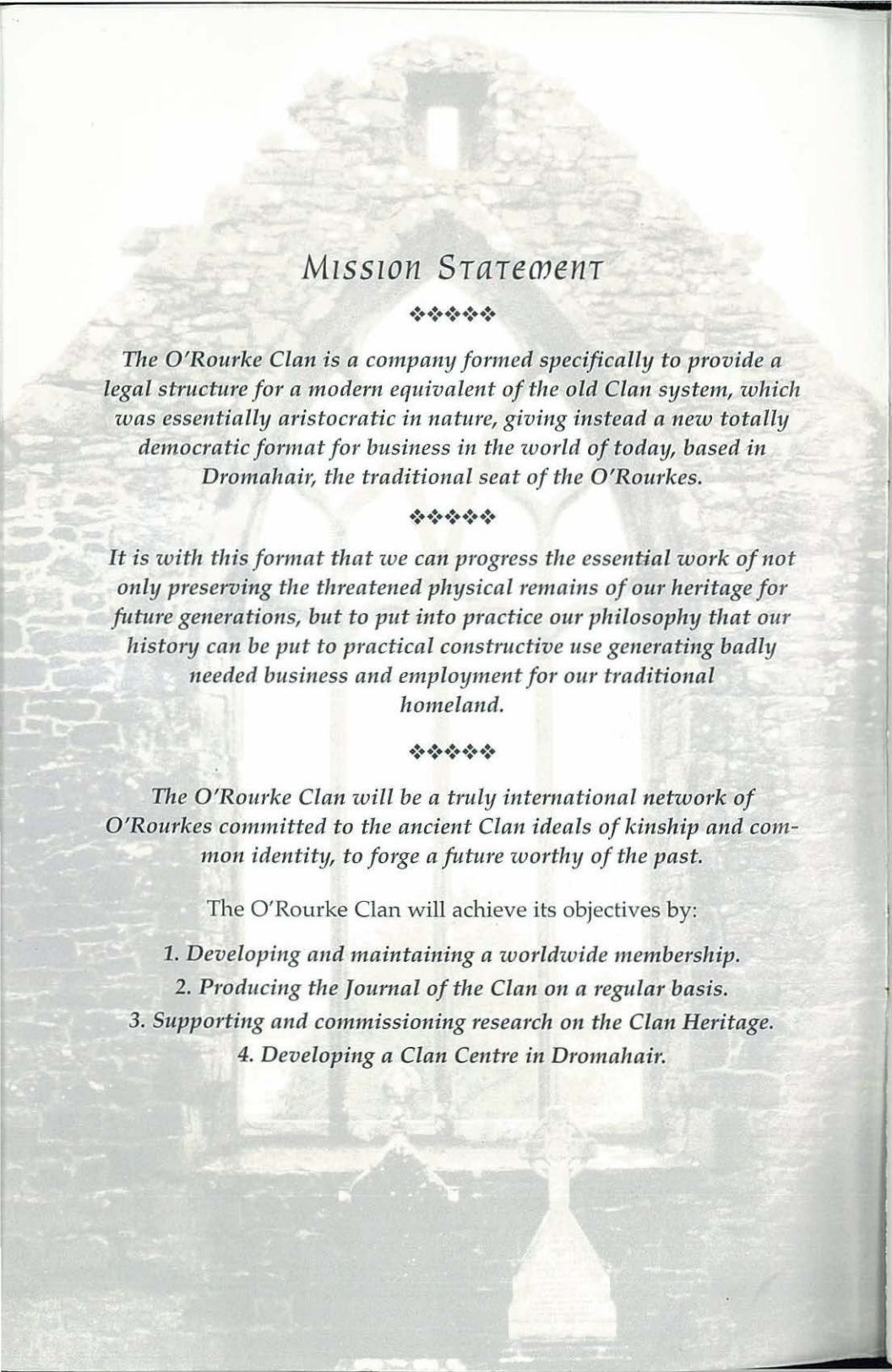


Buagh

The Journal of the O'Rourke Clan

Issue 1 Autumn 1994





MISSION STATEMENT



The O'Rourke Clan is a company formed specifically to provide a legal structure for a modern equivalent of the old Clan system, which was essentially aristocratic in nature, giving instead a new totally democratic format for business in the world of today, based in Dromahair, the traditional seat of the O'Rourkes.



It is with this format that we can progress the essential work of not only preserving the threatened physical remains of our heritage for future generations, but to put into practice our philosophy that our history can be put to practical constructive use generating badly needed business and employment for our traditional homeland.



The O'Rourke Clan will be a truly international network of O'Rourkes committed to the ancient Clan ideals of kinship and common identity, to forge a future worthy of the past.

The O'Rourke Clan will achieve its objectives by:

1. *Developing and maintaining a worldwide membership.*
2. *Producing the Journal of the Clan on a regular basis.*
3. *Supporting and commissioning research on the Clan Heritage.*
4. *Developing a Clan Centre in Dromahair.*

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RE-ESTABLISHING THE O'ROURKE CLAN

The O'Rourke Kingdom of Breifne collapsed 400 years ago in the aftermath of the Spanish Armada's attempted invasion of Britain. The independence of spirit and natural pride of the O'Rourkes which had helped them to maintain and control the Kingdom of Breifne for 800 years was seen as a threat to English control in Ireland.

The state papers of 1589 show clearly how Brian and the O'Rourkes of Breifne were seen by those who were planning to destroy them. On April 6th 1589 Sir Richard Bingham, Earl of Connaught, wrote that Brian O'Rourke "caused a picture of her majesty (Queen Elizabeth I) to be drawn at a horse's tail and kept his Christmas according to the Pope's computation."

On May 30th 1589 Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam wrote about the O'Rourkes, "They are by nature given to swell up in pride with any small advantage or countenance. This will set O'Rourke, a most proud drunken baggag, not to regard me, or this council, any whit'. On June 10th 1589 Sir Richard Bingham wrote "of all those broils, that sottish and cowardly traitor O'Rourke is the nurse and only stirrer."

The English feared O'Rourke. They reckoned that he could field a significant army including 500 cavalry. By 1591 the English armies which invaded Breifne had almost wiped out the people of Breifne and O'Rourke was in London where he was hanged for treason.

In 1993 we formally re-established the O'Rourke Clan. An English report on Brian (na murtha) said that he considered that to be O'Rourke was greater than to be a King. The O'Rourkes have scattered all over the world but, like Brian who was the last to rule an independant Kingdom of Breifne, they have brought with them a pride in being O'Rourke. Many are "by nature given to swell up in pride' a few may even be "proud drunken baggags" (whatever a bag-gag is?).

We now have a legal and democratic Clan Organisation which will be used by all O'Rourkes world-wide to research and preserve our heritage. We need the support of all the O'Rourkes to build a great

modern world-wide O'Rourke Clan which will be based in Dromahair, the ancient seat of the O'Rourkes of Breifne. We are seeking this support in many forms, including membership, canvassing of members, research into our heritage, articles on O'Rourkes from all over the world and financial support to carry out research and to purchase and renovate some of our great heritage of places and buildings.

There are over 12,000 O'Rourke families scattered all over the world with about 1000 in the Republic of Ireland compared to 6,000 in the US. We are hoping to eventually send this copy of our Journal *Buagh* to all 12,000 on our mailing list.

We are hoping that at least 800 -1,000 persons/families will join our Clan company. However, this still means that our Clan organisation will depend enormously on voluntary support.

We are receiving financial support from Leitrim County Enterprise Board to print and mail this first issue of the Journal to 12,000 families. Leitrim County Enterprise Board supports our plans because they see benefits, especially tourism, from the development of an O'Rourke Clan organisation in Dromahair.

We are building an O'Rourke Clan Organisation which we can all be proud of. Please help us in this great endeavour.

Felim O'Rourke

An Caithaoirleach/Chairman

From the Dearbhfhine to all O'Rourkes

WELCOME TO YOUR HERITAGE

Welcome to you all from the dearbhfhine, (the management committee), we hope you will find this publication informative, interesting, inspirational and even entertaining. Many people have over the years put supreme efforts into the research of the history of the O'Rourkes and to them we owe our thanks and we apologise if our publications are broad based in content as we have to satisfy the needs of all interests. "Buagh" will hopefully be for not only all family historians, but more importantly, for would be or aspiring ones to carry on the work. "Buagh", the title of this journal is the Clan's war cry. We are sure that you know that it translates as "Victory" or "Victorious", that is, from the Irish verb "to win". Thus our journal will be our war cry. Like everything else we are setting out to achieve, it will require involvement and contributions from you all to make it worthwhile and so we look forward to hearing from you all with your ideas, articles and comments. By generating interest in the Clan we will ensure that the inheritance continues. The history of our Clan does not stop with Elizabethan conquests, or the Treaty of Limerick, but continues up to this very day. Whilst we will be publishing articles on the O'Rourke Clan at its most powerful, as Kings and Lords of Breifne, we also will be interested in articles on the Clan as they were scattered across the globe, from the wild geese in Europe to the famine emigrations to the New World and so on. One thing is for sure, the O'Rourkes since leaving Breifne, have accomplished many great things, even greater things. The achievements of the O'Rourkes can be seen in every facet of life, and their accomplishments in such spheres as Industry, Commerce Science, Arts, Politics, the Clergy and Military Service are proof of the enduring qualities of that make us what we are.

Heritage is a strong word, an important word. Your inheritance. There are many reasons why people study history, especially their

family history. There seems to come a point in most people's lives when they realise they may not be unique and maybe just a link between what has been and what is to come, or just a desire to have something greater to hand on to the next generation than material possessions. The old saying "You have to know where you have come from to know where you are going" could be the key to that realisation. We are all products of the past, yet so ready to ignore it. We repeat the mistakes, which, if understood, should give us the knowledge, courage and strength to face the future. Our ancestors painstakingly recorded for us events and details of life in their time. It is in this that the key to our own genetic make-up can sometimes be found. Thereby history becomes a journey of self-discovery.

For us in Dromahair, the job is two-fold. Firstly, to get on with the job of the preservation of our heritage for all our children and their children. This particular task is becoming ever increasingly more difficult in today's Ireland, where we are suffering from such problems as rural decay, unemployment and emigration, etc. and the short term solution is development that ignores the importance of historical sites, for promised immediate results. We have already lost some valuable material and ruins forever, and everything that is left is under immediate severe threat. Ironically, the preservation of our heritage could prove to be the biggest long term asset we have in this area, but the case will have to be made very strongly for us to achieve anything.. This is where we will need your support, both financially and morally in lobbying for the cause.

Secondly, to be here to welcome home and to try to eventually give you all you seek. Dromahair can be your spiritual home. It is a beautiful unspoilt area, and can seem a million miles away from the hub-bub and pressures of modern life. The air is amongst the cleanest in Europe and boasts such facilities as salmon and trout fishing, pony trekking, etc., and, of course, it is W. B. Yeats country. An ideal place for a holiday, or even to just find peace to discover yourself. This is life in the slow lane! It would also be nice to think that we are fulfilling our traditional role of looking after our homelands by providing some input into the local economy, which being in the West of Ireland shares the crisis of depopulation because of unemployment. It will be good to see you all back here sometime.

We were once in Irish Terms, one of the strongest Clans, proud people. We can again be what we once were, but on an international scale and we owe it to our ancestors to preserve what we can of our culture, heritage and values for the future. Thereby, we justify their existence on this earth and pay the debt of thanks for what we are today.

Patrick J. O'Rourke

on behalf of An Dearbhfhine -

Patrick J., Felim, Charles, Michael, Serita and Claire O'Rourke

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

A Report on the Formation and First Annual

General Meeting of the O'Rourke Clan Ltd.

Held on Saturday 20th March 1993,

The Abbey Hotel, Dromahair.

It was an historic occasion in Dromahair when the successful formation of the O'Rourke Clan Ltd meeting was held in the Abbey Hotel, Dromahair.

The formation of the new company was the result of a long evolutionary process to find the correct structure for an organisation to, not only preserve and protect the history and heritage of the O'Rourke Clan, but to realise the potential benefits available in the present day context. The new company was an effective merging of the interests and objectives of two elements:

Firstly the O'Rourke Historical Society, initiated by Felim O'Rourke of Rosses Point (a lecturer at Sligo RTC) who had put so much work into bringing interested O'Rourke's in Ireland together, and had held meetings at Trinity College, Dublin. Secondly, The O'Rourke Clan Trust, initiated by Patrick J. O'Rourke, who relocated from England last year to instigate the collation and publication of all available historical information, and database contacts on computer in Dromahair, as well as providing a contact point for O'Rourkes worldwide to encourage them to visit their traditional homelands.

The formation was timed to coincide with the visit to Dromahair of Timothy O'Rourke of Los Angeles and his family. Timothy, who works in the legal and contracts department of film giant 20th Century Fox, was accompanied by father and mother Jack and Loretta, brother Daniel, uncle and cousin Robert and Michael. He has visited Dromahair several times and has put many years work into his research and publications on a variety of subjects.

The meeting was chaired by Felim O'Rourke, who thanked all those who had put in so much effort in the past years, into the task of research, including Sr. M. Elizabeth of Sligo, Betty McDermot for her

publication "O'Ruaire of Breifne", Fr. Dan Gallogley of St. Patrick's College, Cavan for his excellent work with the Breifne Historical Society, and Jack Kerrigan of Dromahair IRD for his efforts in organising past festivals etc.

The company secretary, Patrick J. O'Rourke, then read the numerous apologies and messages of goodwill from O'Rourkes unable to attend, with a special message from a telephone conversation with Count George O'Rourke who lives in Paris and has taken a keen interest in developments, and is hoping to visit Ireland this year as part of the family's tradition of maintaining links with Ireland. Count George's family were "Wild Geese" and were members of the Russian aristocracy, the best known being Count Joseph, Colonel in Chief of the Russian Empire, one of the generals who defeated Napoleon at the gates of Moscow.

Patrick then read the aims and objectives of the Company which were tailored to re-establish the traditional Clan structure, but with a new legal democratic format. Elections were held for the management committee and the results as follows: Felim O'Rourke, Patrick J. O'Rourke, Michael O'Rourke, Charles O'Rourke, Serita O'Rourke and Claire O'Rourke.

Michael is a teacher and lecturer, Charles an executive, and Serita and Claire daughters of Frankie and Anne O'Rourke, one of the last families of O'Rourkes left in Dromahair.

Everyone present agreed that the meeting had been a success and now looked forward to having a formal body to represent O'Rourkes worldwide and to get on with the tasks laid out in the aims and objectives of the Company. A bi-annual newsletter will be published on the work and progress of the Company and regular meetings of the Management Committee will be held in Trinity College, Dublin and Dromahair alternately.

ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY OF THE O'ROURKES

by Brian O'Rourke, Galway

When the O'Rourke Clan was established, I was asked to contribute to a brief sketch of the history of the clan. I both feared and welcomed the task. I am not an historian, and had only the most rudimentary notion of the subject. Yet I saw the assignment as an opportunity for some self-discovery, both for myself and for many others of the name around the world. Indeed, the idea of communicating some knowledge of their roots to these far-flung O'Rourkes being a new one, the project itself could be seen as a small contribution to the family history. Having consulted some books and articles which drew in their turn on medieval Irish Annals, I was, I admit somewhat dismayed by the partial nature of the bulk of the information available. Most of the entries in The Annals seemed to concern the battles of chieftains against their kinsmen - to retain power - against their Gaelic neighbours - to protect or extend their territories - and, in due course, against the English authorities. At times, one almost felt like agreeing with the English commentator who wrote, in 1515, "there is no land in this world of so long continual war within himself, nor of so great shedding of Christian blood, nor of so great robbing, spoiling, preying and burning, nor of so great wrongful extortion continually, as Ireland". One longed for more references to the lives of the ordinary people. And so, I thought it might be a good thing to preface the sketch of the history of the O'Rourkes by a few simple items of political and social interest, to provide some sort of context.

Some of the information that follows is gleaned from native sources; some is to be treated with caution, because of the anti-Irish bias often associated with it; some taken from the accounts of foreign visitors to Ireland, who paid detailed attention to aspects of life which the Irish themselves often neglected to document.

IRISH WAYS & IRISH LAWS

During the period which concerns us (9th to 16th centuries), Ireland was sub-divided into about 150 petty kingdoms or chiefdoms. The King or Chief of a particular clan would exercise power over certain vassal clans; he, in his turn would be subject to a provincial King - of Connacht, Leinster, Meath, etc. - and for a few centuries, the office of High King of Ireland existed, whereby one provincial King would claim supreme authority. Succession to the office of King or Chief did not automatically go to the eldest son; contenders for election could include half-brothers, nephews, cousins, over a span of four generations. (Half-brothers were numerous, as Gaelic chieftains often married several times; divorce was allowed by native ("Brehon") law, and the concept of illegitimacy did not exist.)

One feature of the nobility's activity for which The Annals do give credit is their patronage of piety and learning. They endowed monasteries and they provided support for the country's sophisticated literary culture. Schools existed for the education of poets and other scholars, who enjoyed patronage from the chieftains for their conservation of native scholarship and their poems of praise for themselves.

The Gaels were basically a rural, pastoral people. "Most of the Irish towns were founded either by the Norsemen or the Anglo-Normans. This accounts for their isolated position as centres of organised trade, and of English law and influence during the political disturbances of the medieval period."

Trade between Ireland and the Continent was fairly active. The exports were largely raw materials, hides and skins, timber, tallow, fish, flax, leather, wool, finished rugs, linen yarn and frieze. The chief import was wine, which came from France and Spain. Other imported commodities were iron and salt, spices, a variety of miscellaneous goods from England, such as pewter-ware, silks, groceries and mercenaries, ammunitions and arms. The spinning and weaving necessary to produce cloth and frieze was certainly carried on in the towns; yarn was brought in remote districts, however, and cloth may have been made throughout the country.

There must have been considerable traffic besides that in arms

DRAWN AFTER THE QVICKE



between the seaport towns and the interior, from which the bulk of Irish produce came. There is little evidence of an extensive money economy in the country districts, however. Ransoms were often reckoned in horses and herds; rents were generally paid in cows; and some of the greatest of the Irish Chiefs are described in 1586, as "Lords of cattle but not of much money."

The houses of the people at large were small and poor, many of them built of rods and wattles plastered over with clay and covered with straw, circular huts supported on poles, without windows, in which when a fire was lit in the centre, the smoke escaped from a hole in the roof. The Irish villages were built of these huts clustered round the mansions of the nobles. These mansions, timbered in earlier times, were stone-built from about the thirteenth century onwards; they were the "castles", the ruins of hundreds of which now dot the Irish countryside.

As to sleeping habits, an English traveller, Fynes Moryson, who visited Ireland in 1600, noted a custom observed centuries earlier among the Welsh: "They make a fire in the midst of the room, and around about it they sleep upon the ground, without straw or other thing under them, lying all in a circle about the fire, with their feet towards it. And their bodies being naked, they cover their heads and upper parts with their mantels, which they first make very wet, steeping them in water of purpose, for they find that when their bodies have once warmed the wet mantles, the smoke of them keeps their bodies in temperate heat all the night following. "Other travellers refer to the use of rushes as bedding, one noting that they are "newly cut and full of water and ice."

Depicted in the illustration on page 10, taken from a wood cutting, are what are believed to be Kerne, (foot soldiers) of the period of Henry VIII, and is a fairly accurate contemporary picture of the dress of this period. The hair was worn long and over the face, known as "the glibes" or "glib" and thickly matted, which according to some accounts could even stop a sword blow! The body of the dress was the "leine-chroich" or saffron shirt. this was made of up to 20 yards of linen, pleated and folded to produce a very practical and sometimes flamboyant garment. Over this was worn the "Brat" or mantle. The sword shown was a uniquely Irish design with the ring pommel. The general overall image was eventually clearly defined by the anti-Gaelic laws of Elizabeth I in which most of the dress was made illegal in an attempt to stamp out the Gaelic identity.

What of dress? The following description refers to the sixteenth century, but, as in many other aspects, Irish lifestyle would have changed little in this over a long period of time. "The poorer inhabitants of the bogs and mountains went bareheaded, with little other covering than the celebrated Irish cloak, and a wide linen tunic gathered into numerous pleats with wide-hanging sleeves, generally dyed saffron colour, close-fitting hose extending from hip to ankle called "trews" or "trouses", conical caps of frieze upon their heads, and untanned leather brogues upon their feet. The women were fond of bright colours and many ornaments, and wore a folded linen head-dress...."

The following accounts give some idea of Irish eating habits towards the end of the sixteenth century, and, presumably, for a long time before. "Shamrocks, watercresses, roots and other herbs they fed upon, oatmeal and butter they cram together. They drink whey, milk and beef-broth, flesh they devour without bread...." They do not eat oftener than once a day, and this is at night; and that which they usually eat is butter with oaten bread. They drink sour milk, for they have no other drink; they do not drink water, although it is the best in the world." "They devour great morsels of meat unsalted, and they eat commonly swine's flesh, seldom mutton,and therewith swallow whole lumps of filthy butter....The aforesaid wild Irish do not thresh their oats, but burn them from the straw, and so make cakes thereof, yet seldom eat this bread... They willingly eat the herb Shamrock, being of a sharp taste....Neither have they any beer made of malt and hops,...but they drink milk like nectar, warmed with a stone first cast into the fire, or else beef-broth mingled with milk...they have no tables, but set their meat upon a bundle of grass, and use the same grass for napkins to wash their hands." This last commentator was obviously referring to poorer people; for table etiquette in wealthier houses we may look to another source. An anonymous Spaniard wrote, in 1579: "The knives which are used at table are so long, that they extend even their daggers in size. The more honourable person sits in the centre; the next in dignity sits at his right, and so on in order until the range of seats is filled. All sit facing towards the entrance door: that thus, they say, they may be always ready to repel the attacks of their enemies. Which detail might lead

credence to the observation of another Spaniard ten years later, that, "The chief inclination of these people, is to be robbers, and to plunder each other; so that no day passes without a call to arms among them". And that conveniently brings us full circle to the point where we may take up the history of the O'Rourkes proper.

ORIGINS OF THE O'ROURKE DYNASTY

The name O'Rourke - Irish O'Ruairc - means "grandson of Ruairc". It was first used as a surname in the tenth century, but the origins of the family can be traced to much earlier times. Ruairc (from the old Norse Hrothekr, "famous King") was the name of a Chieftain of Breifne - modern-day counties Cavan and Leitrim, approximately - who died about 893; it was his grandson Ferghal, elected chieftain about 945, who first called himself O'Ruairc. Their people had conquered Breifne - described in early sources as one of "the three rough places of Ireland" - in the eighth century. They belonged to one of the three main branches of the Ui Briuin dynasty which was expanding out of its homeland in mid-Roscommon and dominating Connaught. The Ui Briuin derived from a fifth-century King of Connaught. Brion, son of High King Eochu Mugmedon ("lord of slaves") and half-brother of Niall of the Nine Hostages, who was responsible for introducing St. Patrick to Ireland as a slave.

KINGS OF CONNAUGHT

For six and a half centuries after Ferghal, the O'Rourkes would be the ruling dynasty of Breifne, first of the whole territory, then, from about 1250 on, of its western portion, while the O'Reillys (who, with them constituted the Ui Briuin Breifne) were lords of the eastern section. Ferghal was the first of four O'Rourke chiefs to challenge the O'Connors successfully for the Kingship of Connaught, as well as to try to extend Breifne's frontiers into Meath. When he was killed in 966, a poet wrote: "Since Hector was slain by the Greeks, since Achilles was slain at pleasant Troy, there has not been killed - it is no lie - a splendid warrior like the noble grandson of Ruairc." (It was this Ferghal who built the round tower at Clonmacnoise, known as O'Rourke's Tower. It was struck by lightning in 1135 and lost twenty feet of its height.)

The second O'Rourke King of Connaught was Art Uallach ("The Proud"), who ruled from about 1030 until he was slain in 1046. His exploits included the plundering of two of Ireland's famous monasteries - Clonfert and Clonmacnoise. The Annals see the latter deed as provoking the vengeance of God and Saint Kieran: his cattle were soon afterwards killed by a mysterious plague, and his own death followed two years later. His successor as O'Rourke chief, Aedh, likewise eventually became King of Connaught in 1067; he too was a plunderer of Clonfert and Clonmacnoise. He was killed in 1087 by Ruairi O'Connor, who assumed the Kingship of Connacht, only to be deposed by Muirceartach O'Brien, High King of Ireland, in 1095, and replaced by Domhnall O'Rourke, who was killed seven years later by some of his own subjects.

Later O'Rourke chiefs abandoned their claim to Connaught, in the face of strong O'Connor opposition, and turned their attention to Meath. One such as Aedh, (nicknamed "the flatnosed man"), who made several raids on that territory. In 1117 he killed the superior of the monastery of Kells and slaughtered the community; The Annals of Ulster denounced the deed by quoting from the Psalms: "The countenance of the Lord is against those who do these evil things, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." Aedh was killed by the Meathmen in 1122 after he had taken a prey from them. The

Annals comment, not surprisingly, that the men were acting "at the instigation of the saints."

TIGHEARNAN MOR

The one-eyed Tighearnan Mor, who ruled from 1122 till his death in 1172, was the most powerful of all the O'Rourke chiefs. Under him the territory of Breifne grew to its greatest extent, and was strong enough to have an influence on national politics. A proud, ambitious, contentious, vengeful man, he was seldom absent from the field of battle, with a view to extending his power directly or to furthering his interests by allying himself now with one, now with another of the rival claimants for the high Kingship, between whose territories Breifne constituted a buffer zone.

What he is best remembered for, however, is his supposed role in the coming of the Normans to Ireland. According to legend, it was because of his revenge on Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster, who had eloped with his wife, Dervorgilla, that Dermot sought - and obtained - help from overseas. Dervorgilla is popularly regarded as the main female villain of Irish history. W. B. Yeats's play, *The Dreaming of the Bones* perpetuates the legend by portraying her ghost as restless with guilt for her misdeeds. And Thomas Moore, in one of his Irish Melodies evokes the anger of the cuckolded Tighearnan and his prophecy of foreign invasion and other bloody consequences.

The legend simplifies: In fact fifteen years elapsed between the cuckolding and the Normans' arrival. There was a link, however. To grasp it we shall follow the thread of Tighearnan's relations with MacMurrough - as good a way as any, incidentally, of viewing a cross-section of his bewildering military exploits.

In 1126 the High King, Turlough O'Connor prevented MacMurrough from succeeding his father as King of Leinster. Two years later, Tighearnan O'Rourke accompanied O'Connor on an invasion of Leinster; they raided as far south as Wexford, and "wrought great destruction of cattle on that route." This was O'Rourke's first clash with MacMurrough, the start of an implacable rivalry. (The same year, 1128, Tighearnan perpetrated a shocking deed which could have caused his downfall: he attached Celsus, Archbishop of Armagh, and his retinue, killing some of them, including a cleric

who was in charge of the sacred relics. One of The Annals described it as "An ugly, ruthless, unprecedented deed which earned the malediction of the men of Eirinn both lay and clerical, for which no equal was found previously in Eirinn; "two defeats suffered shortly afterwards by Tighearnan were seen as a "vindication of the honour of St. Patrick's people."

In 1138, after an indecisive encounter with O'Connor and O'Rourke, MacMurrough, with allies from Meath, plundered Fermanagh and Breifne, destroying the crops so that "an insufferable famine prevailed amongst them the following year." In gaining revenge for his humiliation of ten years earlier, MacMurrough was deepening the enmity between himself and O'Rourke. Five years later the two rivals were briefly brought together when O'Connor, having conquered Meath, divided part of it between them. They lost this territory in another re-alignment the following year. O'Rourke got some of it back in 1149, but, in 1152, MacMurrough was one of those responsible for dispossessing him of it, and for deposing him from his chieftaincy. It was in that year, too, that MacMurrough offered Tighearnan the supreme insult of making off with his wife.

The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* say that MacMurrough took Dervorgilla to satisfy his "insatiable, carnal and adulterous lust. She was procured and induced thereonto by her unadvised brother, Melaughlyn, for some abuses of her husband, Tyernan, done to her before". The contemporary *Song of Dermot and the Earl* portrays Dervorgilla as being in love with Dermot, but says that he was interested in her only as a means of gaining revenge on O'Rourke for helping to depose him in 1128; he pretended love for her, however, and she invited him to come and take her. According to Keating, a 17th century historian, there had been "an illicit relationship between them for many years previously." Gerard of Wales, a historian writing within a few decades of the event, says: "Diarmuid had long been burning with love for the lady and took advantage of her husband's absence". No doubt she was abducted because she wanted to be, and she herself arranged that she become the kidnapper's prize. She was 44 years of age at the time, he was 62.

The abduction - or elopement - was certainly not the sole cause of Dermot's later defeat, which led to the Norman invasion. But it was

a grievous personal insult to O'Rourke, and intensified his enmity to MacMurrough; in that respect, it did contribute directly to subsequent events. Turlough O'Connor took Dervorgilla away from MacMurrough shortly afterwards, and handed her back to her father. The following year, she returned to O'Rourke, recently restored to his chieftaincy. (They may not have lived again as man and wife, but in 1156, they attended together the Church Synod at Mellifont, the first Cistercian Abbey in Ireland; on that occasion Dervorgilla "gave the Church of Mellifont three score ounces of gold, a chalice of gold for the altar of Mary, and a cloth for each of the nine other altars in the Church." Her largesse was later to benefit Clonmacnoise: the Nun's Church there was built at her behest; it was completed in 1167. She retired to Mellifont Abbey in 1186, where she died in 1193 at the age of 85.)

The next encounter between the two arch-enemies came in 1156, when MacMurrough and his allies defeated O'Rourke in a battle near Tara. Ten years and several campaigns later, O'Rourke joined with the men of Meath and the Norse of Dublin in invading MacMurrough's territory; they burned his castle at Ferns and expelled him from his kingdom. At last O'Rourke had revenge for the insult offered to him "before the men of Ireland" by Dermot in abducting his wife. At this point, MacMurrough turned for help to the Normans, across the sea, as the only hope of recovering his kingdom. He returned the following year "with a force of Galls". Challenged by O'Rourke and O'Connor, he submitted after some skirmishing, and gave O'Rourke one hundred ounces of gold in atonement for the injury he had done to them by abducting his wife. He was however only buying time. In 1169, fresh Norman forces arrived, and, with MacMurrough, conquered Leinster and captured Dublin. MacMurrough pursued his vendetta against O'Rourke by invading his territory and carrying off "many prisoners and cows". With regard to MacMurrough's eventual death in 1171, The Annals of the Four Masters refer to it as "an insufferable and unknown disease, for he became putrid while living", (probably Syphilis). He died at Fearnamore "without making a will, without penance, without the Body of Christ, without unction, as his evil deeds deserve".

Later that year O'Rourke took part in an unsuccessful siege of Dublin, and suffered a heavy defeat. The following month, Henry II, King of England, landed in Ireland; like most others, O'Rourke submitted to him, to salvage what he could. Henry granted Meath to a Norman lord, Hugh de Lacy, and as soon as Henry II departed for England, a meeting was arranged to discuss this settlement on Tlachtgha (the modern Hill of Ward near Athboy, Co. Meath.) O'Rourke (by now an old man) and De Lacy were to meet alone and unarmed, however "treachery was apparent and Donald O'Rourke, a kinsman of Tighearnan's, acting as an interpreter assisted DeLacy in the affair. Tighearnan, before he was overpowered, managed to strike off an arm of his double- faced relative, but was killed by De Lacy, his head was cut off and sent to Dublin "to be set up over the city gate - a spectacle of intense pity to the Irish". His body was gibbeted with feet upwards on the North side of the city. He had lived by the sword, and he died by it.

DECLINE

After Tighearnan, there was no one fit to rule Breifne with an iron hand as he had done for fifty years. Immediately the Kingdom was torn apart by civil strife over succession to the chieftaincy. Over the next hundred years some twenty leading members of the O'Rourke dynasty were killed or assassinated, twelve of them at the hands of their own kinsmen. In truth, the O'Rourkes never recovered from this orgy of self-destruction; their kingdom became the easy prey of the O'Connors, the O'Reillys, and the De Lacys, Anglo-Norman lords of Meath.

The absence of a strong O'Rourke chief and the consequent chaos gave the stronger of O'Rourke's vassals an opportunity to revolt. The first of these were the MacRanall (Reynolds), but their revolt was put down fairly quickly. The O'Reilly's however, were less easy to deal with; by about 1240, they had effectively broken the power of the O'Rourkes. By 1256, the O'Rourkes had regained west Breifne, (present-day County Leitrim), while the O'Reilly's were confined to east Breifne (present County Cavan). The next two decades saw continual interference in the affairs of Breifne on the part of the O'Connors, who claimed the overlordship of Breifne, as their own power-base was shrinking. By the time that this pressure was removed in the 1280's by the O'Connor's concentration on problems closer to home, Breifne, East and West, were becoming insignificant kingdoms.

The next few centuries brought no abatement in the warring activities of the O'Rourkes. There were regular conflicts with their near neighbours the O'Reilly's, as well as inconclusive battles against the Maguires of Fermanagh, and resistance to the expansionist designs of the northern O'Donnells. In the second half of the fourteenth century, much O'Rourke energy was concentrated on dislodging the Clan Murtough, a displaced sept of the O'Connors who had settled in their territory by 1340. (The man who finally expelled them was another Tighearnan Mor, the strongest O'Rourke chief since his namesake of the twelfth century.) And there was no lack of internal strife, with war between rival branches of the family over succession.

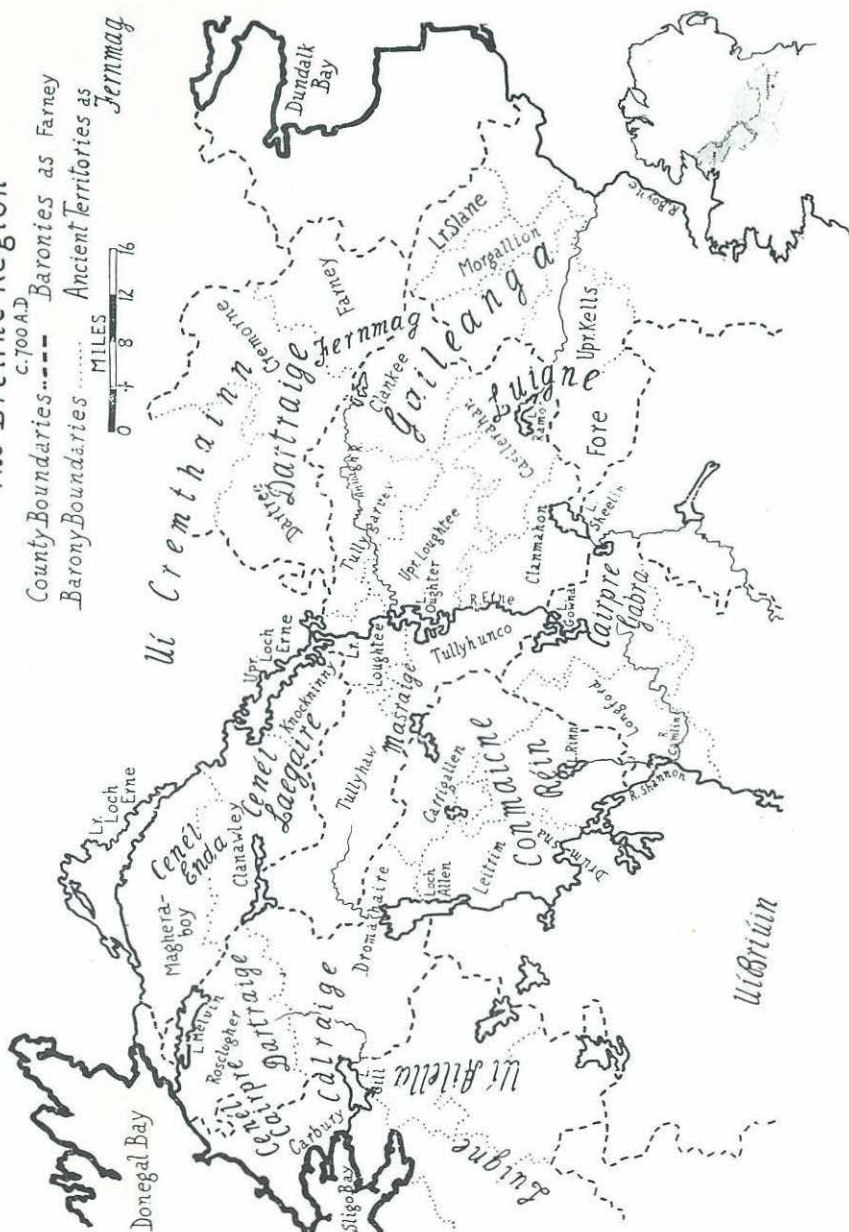
The growth of the power of the O'Donnells was marked by frequent

C. 700 A.D.

County Boundaries...-- Barones as Farney

Barony Boundaries Ancient Territories as

Fernmag



The Breifne Region c. 700 A.D.

incursions into Connaught, and, eventually, by their attempts to impose their own candidates as chieftains on Breifne, on which they laid a protection tribute. The O'Rourkes were now fully under the control of the O'Donnells. In 1523 Aedh O'Donnell, having successfully dealt with an alliance ranged against him - in which the O'Rourkes had had no part - raided Breifne, "burned its edifices and corn and left nothing worth notice in it without burning." He was back again, wrecking further destruction, four years later.

The last O'Rourke who lived the traditional lifestyle of an aggressive warring Gaelic ruler, without interference from the English authorities, was Brian Ballach ("the freckled"), chief from 1536 to 1562. A ruthless man, who is thought to have organised the killings of one of his own sons and of a nephew, he nonetheless earned himself a glowing obituary in *The Annals of Connacht*: "there died that tree of victory, that thicket of shelter, that fruitful branch,....the man who most compelled the neighbouring territories to yield him rents and tributes, who offered the best hospitality and the greatest gifts to musicians and entertainers and men of art: who of all the seed of Adam bought most poems and earned most praise; who had the greatest number of Irish gentlemen and nobles in receipt of payment and wages from him: and who acquired the most charter land and sword land on every side. This was the man who bought more wine than any in Erinn, and drank it without stay or stint, the best man in the land: the one to be most honourable remembered for his famous achievements: who was never beaten in fight or fray: who broke through every gap and every pass in spite of his enemies: who possessed the most gold and silver and wealth, horns and cups and goblets, arms and armour and ordnance, flocks and herds and goodly cattle: for, as the proverb says, "he who scatters, gathers."

To be continued in the next issue. The time of Brian naMurtha.

Brian O'Rourke, Galway.

BOOKS

O'RUAIRC OF BREIFNE by Lady Betty McDermot
Drumlin Publications Ltd.

The definitive work on the history of the O'Rourke's and a must for the bookshelf of all O'Rourke households. Beautifully presented and bound. This must serve as a general reference work for all those researching our septs origins. This book must have been the single biggest factor in the current interest in the Clan, and has proved to be a starting point for many O'Rourke's quest for their heritage. If you ever thought you were a unique human being, read this book. It may re-inforce our suspicion that time does not fade your genes. Frightening thought! We all owe a debt of gratitude to Betty McDermot for her work.

O'ROURKE STRONGHOLDS OF WEST BREIFNE
by Sister M. Elizabeth, Sligo.

A brand new publication on a subject which has long been overdue. This is a comprehensive historical guide to all the O'Rourke sites in West Breifne and is an essential acquisition for anyone thinking of visiting their traditional homelands. Sr. Elizabeth must be commended for all the effort she has put into her work, which also dispells a lot of the myths associated with the history of the Clan. From reading this book you will be able to form a real impression of the scale of the power and influence the Clan wielded in its time. She has also included some interesting references to other associated Clans and their sites. We must all congratulate her on, and thank her for her efforts. A real labour of love.

Both books are available from the O'Rourke Clan Ltd. and make ideal presents for the family to keep for posterity.

Prices including Postage and Packing. Allow 28 days for delivery.

	UK	USA
O'Ruaire of Breifne	£20.00	\$55.00
O'Rourke Strongholds	£6.50	\$15.00

Patrick J. O'Rourke

FR. CONN O'ROURKE

On the occasion of the beatification of Irish Martyrs by the Pope in Rome on 27th September 1992 was Fr. Conn O'Rourke of Dromahair, who was hanged at Kilmallock, Co. Limerick in August 1579 for his declared loyalty to the Catholic church, by refusing to acknowledge Queen Elizabeth I as head of the church.

It is probable that Fr. Conn or Connbrather, a brother of Brian n Murtha was ordained a priest in the church of Dromahair Friary in 1576 by the newly appointed bishop of Ardagh, the Franciscan Risteard O'Bradaigh. His superiors then sent him to Paris for further studies. In summer of 1579 he accompanied the young Franciscan Bishop of Mayo, Patrick O'Healy, back to Ireland. Both were coming home to begin priestly work and strengthen the people in their loyalty to the Holy See. By then the Tudor military conquest of Ireland was gaining momentum. But Breifne was still intact. This friary (Creevelea) had so far escaped desecration and suppression, but Sir Nicholas Malby had a ruthless campaign to mop up and take over the West. The Bishop and the priest sailed from Brittany, landed in Kerry, and set out to visit the Earl of Desmond. Eleanor, the Earl's wife betrayed them to the Mayor of Limerick, who captured them and put them in prison. There they were interrogated by Sir William Drury, lord governor of Munster. When they adamantly refused to acknowledge the Queen as head of their church, they were found guilty of treason and condemned to die by hanging. The sentence was carried out at Kilmallock about August 13. The Bishop and priest were hanged until dead, and their corpses were left on the gibbets for some time, to be mocked and ill treated by English soldiers. After a week John Fitzgerald of Desmond buried them in Askeaton Abbey. It would appear that although the officials knew very well who Bishop Healy was, they were probably unaware of the identity of Fr. Conn, especially the fact he was a son of the Chieftain of Breifne O'Rourke. The consequences of which can only be guessed. Fr. Conn may not have been another example of the fighting spirit of the O'Rourkes of Breifne in the conventional sense, but certainly displayed the same qualities of dogged determination and devotion to principle inherent in the Sept, to the end of paying the ultimate price.

CAISLEAN-AN-CHAIRTHE

Castlecar, Glencar, Co. Leitrim

This 12th Century castle was the first built by the O'Rourkes. It was a massive structure, standing 40 yards square by 30 feet high. It was built of rough stone and lime mixed with the blood of bullocks which were killed each day so that the warm blood mixed with lime would form a binding mortar. In a fierce battle in 1487, O'Donnell of Tir Conaill destroyed the castle and killed many of its inhabitants. This battle was recorded by the four masters as the first occasion on which gunpower was used in Ireland in the destruction of buildings. An article in *"The Irish Sword"* No. 41 Page 241 by Seamus Fox (Capt), mentions that; "In 1484 an O'Donnell killed an O'Rourke with a shot from an arquebus, the first use of gunpower in The Irish Annals".

The following is the relevant passage in the annals of the kingdom of Ireland (*The Annals of the Four Masters*); "Brien Roe, the son of Tiernan, son of Tiege, son of Tiernan O'Rourke, Tanist of Breifny, was slain by a dart cast at him by the son of O'Rourke (Owen, son of Felim, son of Tiernan Oge). In consequence of this death, O'Donnell (Hue Roe), marched into Breifni, and laid seige to O'Rourkes town, Caislean-an-Cairthe, which he took, and three of O'Rourke people were slain, and Brian, son of Cathal, son of Tiernan O'Rourke, was slain by Godfrey, the son of Hugh Gallda O'Donnell by the shot of a ball. The castle was demolished by O'Donnell, and O'Rourke, (Felim), was banished from his country into Fermanagh, but O'Donnell (afterwards permitted O'Rourke to come back into his country, and he made peace among the men of Breifny, and compelled the country to rebuild the castle". The ruins of the above castle, Caislean-an-Chaithe, the castle of the rock, (Castlecar) can be seen on the left side of the Sligo - Manorhamilton (Cluanin Ui Ruairc) road, four miles from the latter, in the townland of Castletown, in the valley of Glencar, in the west of the parish of Killasnett, in the north west of the county of Leitrim, the ancient territory of Breifne O'Rourke.

Editor's note: *This ruin is one of many in urgent need of repair and preservation. It would also appear from this, that maybe the first person shot in Ireland with a gun was an O'Rourke. A some what disturbing claim to fame!*

Extract from The Irish Times November 13th 1943

Times Past

FIGHTING RACES

One of the earliest testimonies to the fighting power of the Russian Army was given 180 years ago by an Irishman. At the end of the Seven Years War, Frederick the Great was anxious to meet Count O'Rourke, a native of Leitrim, who had greatly distinguished himself in Russian service, especially at the Siege of Berlin in 1761.

In spite of the warnings of his brother officers, O'Rourke accepted the King's invitation, and on his way back from Russia called at Sans Souci, Frederick's residence near Potsdam. In the course of the conversation the King asked O'Rourke how he could have undertaken the siege of so strongly fortified a place as the capital of Prussia. "Sure" was the reply, "in Russia we obey our King, no matter what we think. If my sovereign had ordered me to storm the gates of Heaven I should have at once made the experiment."

Frederick was delighted at this answer, and presented Count O'Rourke with a diamond studded sword.



Count Joseph O'Rourke

LETTERS FROM THE WILD GEESSE
A RETURN TO BELARUS

by Count John O'Rourke

My mother turned 80 this year. To mark the event, my brother and I accompanied her on a trip to the republic of Belarus. This is the land where my father's family, a junior branch of the O'Rourkes of Breifne, had settled and where my mother's family, the Niezabytowskis, had lived for centuries. It is a land with a turbulent history. Battle fronts and borders have marched across it at regular intervals. Until recently it was part of the Soviet Union. Between the world wars it was Polish. In the 19th century it was Russian. Before the partitions of Poland it was part of the grand Duchy of Lithuania. Over the course of time people living here began to side-step the questions of conflicting identity implied by these changing borders by describing themselves simply as "locals".

My mother fled from here in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939. Now she was returning for the first time. My father, Count Vincent O'Rourke, died in 1979. He never returned.

We are visiting Belarus as guests of the First Congress of Belarussians of the world. We arrive at the surreal, deserted Minsk Airport on an Aeroflot flight from Warsaw. Looking at our passports, the Immigration Officer issuing our entry visas asks with a smile whether there are many Belarussians in Ireland. "I think you may be looking at all of them", I answer, also starting to side-step questions of identity. It would take too long to explain, and he is probably not interested in any case.

On the third day of our trip we join an excursion to Nowogrodek. This town, situated some 150km west of Minsk, is best known as the birthplace of the great Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz. Our guide appears to be claiming him for Belarus. That is a little like saying that Julius Caesar was Italian, but culture and politics can never be disentangled - especially not here. Nowogrodek is pleasantly set on hilly terrain. Most of the houses are wooden one-storey constructions, often painted in garish colours and surrounded by small gardens.

It is a cold, rainy day. I tease my mother about the golden summers of her youth. Did she make them up? Even the Irish could complain

about a July such as this. The bus stops in front of the Town Hall and we take leave of our guide. I telephone Fr. Dziemianko, the pastor of the Roman Catholic parish in Nowogrodek, who is expecting us. While we are waiting for him to come to pick us up, the Minister of Culture appears from somewhere with his retinue. We shake hands. He enquires whether we have lost our way and dashes off again when we assure him we have not. The rain has upset the programme of festivities planned for the excursion.

Fr. Dziemianko arrives and brings us to the presbytery for lunch. He is a tall, heavy set man in his mid-thirties. He was ordained at a time when the Catholic Church in the Soviet Union was still brutally repressed and his soft spoken yet determined manner bears the imprint of those austere days. Everyone at the presbytery speaks Polish, which makes communication easier for us. Fr. Dziemianko is familiar with the O'Rourke surname because Wsielub, the erstwhile family estate, lies within the boundaries of his parish. He is going to take us there this afternoon. After lunch, in his book-lined study/sittingroom/spare bedroom, the question of identity comes up again: "What do you consider your nationality to be?" My surname and passport are Irish, I was born in Canada, I live in Great Britain. This time I attempt an honest answer: "I am a Pole, but a rather odd sort of Pole." Fr. Dziemianko smiles. I am not sure he finds my answer very convincing.

My great-great-grandfather, General Count Joseph O'Rourke, was a highly decorated veteran of the Napoleonic Wars when he retired from active service in the Russian Cavalry in 1819. He married in the same year, and settled on the estate of Wsielub, some 15km. north of Nowogrodek. At 1400 "souls", as estates were described in the days of serfdom, it was quite a large property. He had six sons and two daughters, and his descendants lived there until the outbreak of the second World War.

The last owner of Wsielub was Count Charles O'Rourke, a first cousin of my Grandfather's. The exclusive education he received in Dresden had left him unprepared for the harsh realities of life that he would have to face in his old age. An intellectual and a bibliophile, he lived simply in spite of his considerable wealth, giving his money to charities and, generally, to anyone who pressed him for it. He mar-

ried Countess Maria Tyszkiewicz but they had no children. She died in 1927.

"Your uncle is remembered with affection here", Fr. Dziemianko tells me. "If someone's cow died, your uncle would buy him a new one. You have to realize what a cow means to these people".

The local people also tell of how the old Count was arrested when the Bolsheviks came in 1939 and taken away to prison, in Minsk, on the back of a horse-driven hay cart. (Thanks to the efforts of his cousin, Bishop Edward O'Rourke, through Irish and German diplomatic channels, Charles O'Rourke was eventually released. He died in Poland in 1946.)

We drive out to Wsielub with Fr. Dziemianko. It is still raining. The name Wzielub derives from the Russian words for "all" and "love". Looking at the pleasantly rolling, forested countryside, it is indeed difficult to imagine anyone not liking it.

My mother recalls the events of September 17th, 1939, when the Soviet invasion of Poland began: "We lived 11km from the border. I was woken by the sound of gunfire at dawn. I woke my parents; we gathered what we could, and we left the house in fifteen minutes". She was never to see her home again. "We drove toward Nowogrodek, to my brother-in-law's estate. When we arrived, he, my sister, and their four small children were already preparing to leave. Breakfast was still laid out on the table, and I grabbed what food I could for the journey. A priest, also fleeing westward ahead of the Soviet army, gave us Holy Communion so as to empty the tabernacle in the chapel. We drove on, with my sister and her family in a second car, through Nowogrodek through the Lithuanian border. I remember passing near Wsielub and trying to recall the odd foreign-sounding surname of the old gentleman who lived there. I wondered whether we should not stop in to warn him, but I thought "there is no time". A few hours later she would meet the old gentleman's nephew (my father) at the Lithuanian border. She would be engaged to him two weeks later, married six weeks after that.

Turning off the main road, we skirt a brick wall demarcating the park of the old property and stop at the church. It is a rendered stone structure from the 15th century, dedicated to St. Casimir. A small panel notes that it was rebuilt in 1934. It does not mention that it was

destroyed again during - or perhaps after - the second world war. Until recently trees grew in the nave to the height of the roof. Now it is rebuilt again, quite beautifully except for the tin-sheeted roof which looks rather fragile. A new altar is being assembled. I wonder how many other destructions and restorations the church has known during its 500-year history?

In addition to the work on the Wsielub church, Fr. Dziemianko is supervising the reconstruction of two chapels in the area. A large ex-Jesuit church in the centre of Nowogrodek has been returned by the authorities a few days ago. It is also ruined; construction costs are spiraling upward, but Fr. Dziemianko is undaunted. Beyond the church is a cemetery. A tree-lined alley leads to the family chapel. Various O'Rourkes are buried in the crypt, which cannot be reached because the chapel is used as a store-room during the reconstruction of the main church. Fr. Dziemianko makes no apology for this, nor should he: life here is difficult and the needs of the living have priority over those of the dead.

We leave the church and drive through the old park to the house. The original house was destroyed during the first World War. Charles O'Rourke built a modest, two-storey manor house to replace it. After 1939, a fire destroyed the upper floor, a brick extension was added, and the house now serves as the local hospital. It is a dingy and graceless building. Like everything touched by Communism, it has been defiled. We are taken through the house by a nurse. Some of the original ceramic stoves remain. The oak floors have been painted. The patients look at us sullenly. Outside, the rain continues unabated.

We drive toward some dilapidated buildings now used by the collective farm that runs the estate. We are directed to the house - hut may be a more appropriate word - of an old man who knew Charles O'Rourke. A young man, perhaps his grandson, invites us in. Fr. Dziemianko introduces us. The old man speaks in Russian. He produces a photograph of our uncle. As I ask him some questions, he looks at me suspiciously, without answering. Is my Russian inadequate? Finally he comes out with what is worrying him: "Are you some kind of Communist?" I laugh. "Why should I come here with Fr. Dziemianko?" He relaxes. His stories become fantastic. "When the

Count was arrested, I had to bury all his diplomas. He spoke 19 languages, you know". We thank him, walk back to the car through the mud. "Shall we drive on?" "Yes, I think so. We're getting very wet".

I see a distant parallel with the O'Rourke ruins in Dromahair: the beauty of the landscape, the majestic abbey of Creevelea, O'Rourke's Castle almost beyond recognition. Both Wsielub and Dromahair speak to me of values that endure and of values that pass. Perhaps they also hold the key to an identity which does not depend on borders.

Count John O'Rourke
Oxford, England.

CREEVELEA ABBEY

Dromahaire, Co. Leitrim.

By far the most historic structure in the Dromahair district is the well preserved ruin of the First Franciscan Friary, of strict observance, of Creevelea. It was founded by Owen O'Rourke, Prince of Breffni, and his wife Margaret O'Brien of Thomond, in the year 1508. The first Friars came from Donegal Friary. It was consecrated in 1511 by the Bishop of Kilmore, Bishop Thomas MacBrady. Margaret was interred there in 1512 and Owen in 1528. A magnificent tomb in the chancel of the monastery church marked the spot where they are buried. In 1536 the monastery was accidentally burned down, and one of the Friars Eremon O'Donnell, perished in the flames. Brian O'Rourke, the founder's successor began the work of restoration, but the constant wars in which he was engaged drew him away from this work and it was never completed. It was legally suppressed in 1539, but the suppression decree could not then be enforced. The Friars were still in possession in 1574. In 1590, Sir Richard Bingham, during operations in the neighbourhood, converted the church into a stable for his troopers' horses, and allowed them to cook their victuals on a fire made from the beautifully-carved furniture of the choir. In 1598 the Friars were driven out and the friary wrecked. For a time it was unoccupied but the friars came back to it in 1642. But their stay was not for long, for in 1650 they were finally dispersed and the Puritans took possession of it. The monastery was leased to an undertaker named Harrison, whose infamy is not yet forgotten in Dromahaire. He built himself a castle on one of the Doonbran islands in the River Bonet, at the junction of the parishes of Drumlease, Killanummery and Killery, and proceeded to enrich himself on the proceeds of sacrilege. Erecting a gate at the entrance of the cemetery he demanded a charge for burials. It is worthy of record that it was in the monastery of Dromahaire that Father Donough Mooney, the celebrated Franciscan Provincial and the historian of his order, was ordained and celebrated his first Mass. In his youth he had served as soldier in the army of the Earl of Desmond: tired of military life, he joined the Franciscans in the monastery of Donegal, made his novitiate in Multifarnham,

County Westmeath, and completed his studies at Dromahaire. Afterwards at Louvain he completed his account of the Irish monasteries.

Archdall, in his 'Monasticon Hibernicum', tells that in his time (circa 1780) the monument of the founders was to be seen in the ruined church. No trace of it can now be located. Several O'Rourke tombs, with elaborate carvings and quaint inscriptions, are to be seen. The earliest inscribed slab now to be found is dated May 22nd, 1721, and is in the memory of "Hugh O'Roirk and Catharin McTernan". Across the top is a long panel displaying a spade, a diamond, a club and a heart. Below this panel is the figure of an animal, most likely a cat, which is occasionally depicted among the O'Rourke emblems. No monuments earlier than the eighteenth century appear to have survived.

A horizontal slab marks the grave of Teig McOwen O'Rourke, who died February 2nd, 1730, and his wife Una, died August 2nd, 1737. Several monuments with the O'Rourke Coat of Arms and motto, 'Serviando Guberno', are around the ancient cemetery, the necropolis of the O'Rourkes. Two inscribed slabs, one horizontal and the other a broken head-stone, mark the graves of priests at the east end of the cloisters. The horizontal slab commemorates Rev. Charles Brady, pastor of the parish for thirty years, who died September 4th. 1813, aged 61 years. The broken head-stone records the name of Rev. Peter Bernard Magauran, O.S.F. who was parish priest of Killanummery and died December 1st, 1837. Both monuments show a chalice with a hand on either side of it. A magnificent silver chalice, presented in 1619 to this monastery by Mary, wife of Thaddeus O'Rourke, is still in use in the church of Butlersbridge, near Cavan. This chalice which displays highly skilled workmanship, carries the following inscription: "Maria Ni Domnaill filia Hugonis Magoni Pro AiA Thaddei Ruairc Sui Mariti me fieri fecit Monasterio Chriveleliae, 1619."

This Mary O'Donnell was a half-sister of Red Hugh. Her husband, Thady, was a brother of the Prince of Breifne. Another O'Rourke chalice is preserved in the Oratory at Clonalis, Co. Roscommon, the residence of the O'Conor Don. It was made in 1722 for the monastery at Dromahaire, as shown by the following inscription, which is

around the base: "Orate pro 1111mo ac Rmo, D. Thadaeo O'Rourke Ep. Alad, qui me fieri pro Conv. Petrae St. Pat. Anno 1722." which may be translated "Pray for the most Illustrious and Most Rev. Thadeus O'Rourke, Bishop of Killala, who caused me to be made for the Convent of St. Patrick's Rock, in the year 1722." Dr. Thady Francis O'Rourke was a Franciscan belonging to the monastery of Dromahaire. On August 24th, 1707, he was consecrated Bishop of Killala, and for a quarter of a century afterwards was obliged to adopt various disguises and to live in the neighbourhood of Lough Gill and Dromahaire. Spies were ever on his track, and a report dated March 3rd, 1713, has it that "Timothy Ruork, formerly a Franciscan friar of the convent of Milick, near Banahir, in the county of Galway", was travelling through his Diocese of Killala under an assumed name - "Mr. Fielding".

In a sheaf of despositions taken at Sligo on November 4th 1712, it is reported that the Titular Bishop of Killala, "one Rourke", was busily engaged in the highly treasonable practice of ordaining young priests. After this the Bishop appears to have lived mostly at Dromahaire, where he seems to have had better security. In 1718 he was living in a thatched cabin near the ruined monastery where in the same year he instructed his relatives, the famous Charles O'Connor of Belanagar, in the rudiments of the classics. The O'Connor Don, in whose possession the chalice is now preserved, is a descendant of Charles O'Connor. Bishop Thady O'Rourke was born in, or about, the year 1658, he was the son of Captain Tiernan O'Rourke, who after 1691 accompanied the Irish army to the continent where he was killed in the battle of Luzara in 1702: his mother, Isabel MacDonagh, was a sister of the famous counsellor MacDonagh, of Geevagh, Co. Sligo, an eminent Catholic lawyer, and the only Catholic then allowed to practise at the Irish Bar - he died in 1713. Bishop O'Rourke died on March 2nd, 1734, at the age of 76, and was interred in Dromahaire monastery. A horizontal monument displaying a mitre, crozier and missal, marks his last resting place. The inscription is as follows:

"Here Lyeth ye Body of Thady O'Rourke, B. of Killalla, who Departed ys life March ye 2nd 1734, Aged 76 Fili atq regu princeps That triumphis. Regria petens cali dispiciensque soli."

An inscription at the base records that the monument was restored by Rev. Cormac MacSharry, P.P., Dromahaire, in 1883. The inscription seems to have been then deepened or re-cut, which accounts for the rather archaic Latinity. The Latin portion, reconstructed by the late Canon Carrigan, should read as follows: "Filius stque regum princeps Thadaeus triumphis Regna petens coeli despiciensque soli," which may be translated "Thady, decendent and spiritual director of kings, has succeeded in gaining a heavenly, and in condemning an earthly, kingdom". It is probable that the errors in the latin were due to the worn condition of the original inscription, and that the stone-cutter of 1883 was unacquainted with Latin grammar. The ruins of the monastery are very extensive and the numerous carved slabs are deserving of close examination. On one of the bays near the middle of the north side of the cloister arcade are three interesting carvings, first closely examined by the late H. S. Crawford. The first of these represents a monk in his habit and marked with the stigmata, evidently representing St. Francis. The right hand holds back the robe to show the wound in his side, and the left points to a scroll across the lower part of the figure. This scroll carries an inscription which has not yet been deciphered. As Mr. Crawford points out the inscription seems to have been left unfinished. The second figure represents St. Francis in a pulpit, with a cross of unusual form placed upright beside him, and birds perched on a tree close by. The stem of the tree is turned into a knotted cord springing from the lower part of the pulpit. The third design is a foliage pattern, probably representing a convolvulus.

In the cloisters may be observed single letters (about ten in all) incised on many of the pillars. The original order of these letters is now lost, as the pillars on which they are cut had fallen and have been re-erected. Outside the nave, to the south, is the monument to "O'Donnell Hugh" who died in 1754. It is known as the "Earl's Tombstone." It displays a large shield on which is a hand holding a cross, a coronet is placed above; and the supporters are a bull and a leopard. The motto is "In hoc signo vences" (sic). The monument of Daniel O'Boyle, died 1771, stands in the transept. It bears at the top the letters I.H.S. , with sun, moon and two stars and another luminary, probably the star of Bethlehem.

In 1880 the monastery was vested in the Commissioners of Public Works, and valuable work has since been done to preserve the building from further decay. Even in its ruins this great O'Rourke foundation, one of the last founded before the Dissolution, cannot fail to impress the visitor. After the Williamite confiscations some of the O'Rourkes fled to France with the "wild geese" and served under Patrick Sarsfield.

In 1760 two of the family, John and Cornelius, went from France to Russia, where they received commissions in the army of the Empress, Elizabeth 1. High rank, titles, and decorations awaited them in the armies of the Czars, and their descendants still retain these titles. In 1922 a Russian prelate, Count Edward O'Rourke, was appointed to the Holy See. Bishop Count O'Rourke, who was descended from one of these exiles, was born at Basin, in the diocese of Minsk, Poland, on October 26th, 1876. His career was a notable one and worthy of the noble Breifne family to which he belonged. He was usually known as the "Irish Bishop of Danzig", and it was significant that he should have been chosen to govern that important diocese on the Baltic coast. Bishop Count O'Rourke was in appearance a typical Irishman and, although many generations of his ancestors have never known Ireland yet he spoke the Gaelic language of his forefathers. His mother-tongue was Russian, but he was also a fluent speaker of German, which was the language of his diocese. He was thoroughly conversant with French and English. He took a deep interest in the history of the ancient kingdom of Breiffne and paid visits to Dromahaire, where he collected materials for a history of his family. In 1925 he published in Russian, a very interesting work, *Documents and Materials for the History of the O'Rourke* (Danzig, printed as a manuscript).

Portions in English are extracts from the Irish Annals dealing with the early history of the family. A diocesan history of Danzig, published in German in that year appeared in 1926 and contains an account of the O'Rourke family. The Frontispiece of the book is a photograph of the Bishop. The present diocese of Danzig (now Gdansk) was created in 1925, and Bishop O'Rourke then presided over it. In 1925 the Holy See entrusted him with the special task of ministering to the spiritual and temporal needs of the emigrant

Russian children of Danzig. In this work he was eminently successful, and the labours of this "Irish Bishop of Danzig" will long be remembered in the history of his diocese on the shores of the Baltic. He died in Rome in 1943.

Membership of the O'Rourke Clan Ltd

The O'Rourke Clan Ltd was formed to provide a legal structure for a modern equivalent of the old Clan system, which was essentially aristocratic in nature, giving instead a new, totally democratic format for business in the world of today.

The company is owned by its subscribers and every member has a vote. The general running of the company is the task of the dearbhfhine, or management committee who are elected by, and accountable to the subscribers. This structure will ensure that all O'Rourkes have a chance to get involved in, and contribute something to the future of the Clan. Our Clan will be something to be proud of.

Subscription Rates per annum:

Individual or family membership: £20.00 US\$40.00

Corporate membership: £100.00 US\$200.00

Company Bankers: Bank of Ireland, Stephen Street, Sligo, Ireland.

Account No: 47 05 78 99

Solicitors: Howley Carter & Co. Wine St., Sligo, Ireland.

Accountants: Kieran Egan & Co., Stephen St., Sligo, Ireland.

Merchandising

By the next issue of "Buagh" we hope to be able to offer a comprehensive range of high quality Clan associated goods, and are constantly looking at ideas in this respect. All the profits from this merchandising operation will go towards the Clan Centre Appeal. Should anyone have any interest in this side of the operation, both in design and manufacture, please contact us. More details on request.

The Clan Centre Project Appeal

It is an essential part of the long term philosophy of the O'Rourke Clan Ltd. that the establishment of a permanent presence in Dromahair as a focal point for O'Rourkes is essential for the work of conservation and promotion of our Heritage. To this effect, after initial market research, last year we undertook a feasibility study, grant aided by Leitrim Development Team, to look into the proposal in detail. Copies of this study are available on request. However, we have to now embark on the task of raising the capital to make the idea become a reality. This will initially be in the form of an appeal fund specifically for the purpose. However, we are looking at various forms of sponsorship and ways of recognition and are always open to ideas on the subject. As a brief outline, the Centre would fulfill the following roles:-

1. House the central office facilities giving access through the computer service to historical, genealogical and published information as well as guided tours of sites etc.
2. Collect and display all artifacts, known and yet to be found, connected with the Clan and area.
3. Present audio-visual and other displays of the history of the Clan and Breifne, with specialist subjects on various occasions.
4. Present displays of recreated historical examples of lifestyles, dress etc in a living history environment.
5. Provide a base for all communications world-wide. This will offer a common reference point for all O'Rourkes and other interested historians with the purpose of fostering Clan sentiment.
6. Provide a base to organise and fund all associated projects.

To sum up, it will be an O'Rourke centre for O'Rourkes, that is, it will be your centre for you to visit, enjoy and hopefully support. There are several ways that you can help us, but our prime consideration is finance, and we have a range of ideas by which you can do so, from bequeaths, memorials and testimonials to specific requests.

Should you feel you would like to contribute to this worthwhile cause, please send cheques to the O'Rourke Clan Ltd., marked 'Clan Centre Appeal.' All funds will be held in a special account specifi-

cally for this purpose. We look forward to hearing from you on the matter with your views, comments and suggestions.

Specific Projects Requiring Sponsors

We will be relying on you and your generosity to instigate projects and are looking for individuals to sponsor individual projects. Some examples are listed below, but we are always open to ideas. Each project would be directly attributed to the sponsor by means of a permanent testimonial of their contribution. We have many detailed projects in hand, but a summary of them would be:-

1. A professional video presentation of the History and Strongholds of the O'Rourkes. This would help our promotional efforts for the Centre as well as our work in general. We have a powerful story and it is certainly the material for films.
2. Historical site acquisition and excavation. This is a matter of some urgency as previously mentioned, preserving them for the future. All information would be published, and artifacts retained for the Clan Centre.
3. Translations and publications. There is a wealth of material yet to be published and this is part of the on-going work of the Clan.

For information and costings on any of the above projects, please contact us and we can work together on the details. Again, we look forward to hearing from you.

And Finally.....

We hope to open an office in Dromahair next year as a stepping stone to the objective of a permanent centre and details of this first part of the operation will be circulated to members as soon as details are finalised. We currently have our own IBM compatible computer with Works, DTP and a genealogical programme, but it does need updating to cope with the amount of information incoming. However if you have anything you want to send to us on disk please feel free to do so, (virus free please!)

We would also like your views on the question of gatherings, festivals etc i.e. frequency, content and activities etc. Throughout the summer it can sometimes feel like one long gathering in Dromahair.

If you are coming, please let us know in advance to make sure we make contact and you are looked after.

Our thanks and best wishes go out to the many O'Rourkes who have helped us over the years and who regularly correspond, especially Timothy in Los Angeles, Eugene in Corona De Mar, Patrick in N.Z. and Patrick in Idaho. Your letters are always an inspiration. On a sad note, Jack Kerrigan of Dromahair who as some of you may remember organised the festivals a few years back, died in March this year. He did so much to bring the history of the Clan to the attention of people locally and the contacts made at the first festival are still strong. Having spent most of his life in a wheelchair, he worked very hard on generating interest in the O'Rourkes of Breifne and loved Leitrim. He will be sadly missed.

I hope you agree that what we are doing is worthwhile and we hope you will help the cause by spreading the word for us by photocopying the enclosed membership application forms and circulating them amongst your family. We can in any case be easily contacted by writing to:

The O'Rourke Clan Ltd, Dromahair, Co. Leitrim. Ireland or
Telephone 353-71-64601.

Looking forward to hearing from you and wishing you all a peaceful year.

Mise le meas

Patrick J. O'Rourke.

Quote from an anonymous O'Rourke:-

*"They say the pen is mightier than the sword,
just in case, be good with both!"*

In the next issue: The thorny subject of Chieftainship and the Heraldry office; news, views and letters; Brian na Murtha and more.

Back Cover photo: Creevelea Abbey, Dromahair, Co. Leitrim.

Extracts from Articles & Memorandum of Association

1. The name of the company is "The O'Rourke Clan Ltd."

2. The objects for which the company is established are:-

The advancement of the education of the Public of Ireland (which expression shall include the four provinces of Ireland namely Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Connaught) and persons of Irish descent in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and elsewhere worldwide in the history and culture of the Clan O'Rourke in particular and Irish Clan history and culture in general.

And in furtherance thereof but not otherwise, shall:-

- a. Acquire land /or structures within Ireland for the purposes of the arrangement from time to time or the joining in such arrangements and provisions of exhibitions, meetings, lectures, classes, seminars and training classes relating to Irish Clan history.
- b. Promote and carry out or assist in the promotion and carrying out of researches and surveys of and into Irish Clan history and where appropriate publish the results and observations and commentaries of the same.
- c. Collect and disseminate information on all matters relating to Irish Clan history and exchange information with other bodies having similar objects, whether in Ireland or overseas.
- d. Co-ordinate and co-operate with representatives of governments, voluntary organisations, departments of local and other statutory authorities and individuals in furtherance of the work of the company.
- e. Cause to be written and printed or otherwise reproduced and circulated free of charge or for payment such paper, books, periodicals, pamphlets or other documents or films or recorded tapes (whether audio or visual or both) as shall further the objects of the company.
- f. Collect and restore and preserve the artefacts and relics connected with the Clans of Ireland generally and with the Clan O'Rourke in particular and make provision as expedient for the display of the same to the public.
- g. Preserve, promote and further the Irish language.
- h. Wherever and whenever possible encourage the participation of the handicapped or disabled person's clubs and bodies in the activities of the company.
- i. Provide and promote a Benevolent Fund for O'Rourkes in distress and widows and orphans of O'Rourkes.
- j. Provide and promote a fund to assist in the education of O'Rourkes, to provide scholarships at schools and universities for the sons and daughters of O'Rourkes.
- k. Erect and maintain a Clan O'Rourke Centre in the land known as Breifne for the purpose of fostering Clan sentiment and interest in the history of the Clan O'Rourke and the other Irish Clans worldwide.

